Usage and disposal of mercury

*113. SHRI C. PERUMAL: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has initiated any instruction/guidelines to the private and Government hospitals for usage and disposal of mercury, because the minimal risk level for mercury of 0.2 micro gram, but in hospitals the mercury level is forty times higher than the normal limit which leads to neuro-developmental disorders in newborns;

(b) if so, whether there is any environmental authority to monitor such level to save staff, including doctors and paramedical employees and patients;

(c) the protective measures taken in this behalf; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) to (d) Improper handling and breakage of instruments containing mercury contaminates the solid waste generated in hospitals and can cause environmental pollution.

Guidelines for proper collection and disposal of the spilled mercury have been circulated by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) to all State Pollution Control Boards (SPCBs), Pollution Control Committees (PCCs) in Union Territories and other conterned agencies. The CPCB has also issued instructions to all the SPCBs and PCCs that mercury spillages/losses in health care facilities need to be given proper attention so that spilled mercury is collected and sent back to the manufacturers, and measures are taken to ensure that the spilled mercury does not become part of the bio-medical or other solid waste generated from the healthcare facilities. Any waste containing equal to or greater than 50 ppm or mercury is categorized as hazardous waste as per the Hazardous Wastes (Management & Handling) Rules, 2003 and healthcare facilities are required to dispose of such wastes in accordance with the said Rules. The SPCBs/ PCCs have also been requested to bring this aspect/requirement to the notice of the healthcare facilities and ensure incorporation of appropriate conditions in the authorizations granted by them under the Bio-Medical Waste (Management & Handling) Rules, 1998.

No ill effects of mercury in any Central Government Hospital have come to the notice of the Government.

Sri Lanka's observation regarding Setusamudram Project

†*114. SHRI SHREEGOPAL VYAS:
SHRI BALAVANT *ALIAS* BAL APTE:

Will the Minister of SHIPPING ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Sri Lankan Government has called Setusamudram project dangerous for marine life and coastal areas of the country;

(b) whether they have informed about it to the Indian Government; and

(c) the reaction of Government thereon?

THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI T. R. BAALU): (a) to (c) The Sethuamudram Ship Channel Project is an Indian Project and is located

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.